

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPED TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN  
DAVID BENTKOWSKI AND JOE TONE

Joe Tone ("J.T."): Scene, this is Joe.

David Bentkowski ("D.B."): Joe, David Bentkowski returning your call.

J.T.: How are you?

D.B.: Good, how are you?

J.T.: Good. So, uh, davidbentkowski.com that's your charity website, right?

D.B.: Yes.

J.T.: Is this new?

D.B.: Uh, I had a website before when I did this for Channel 3 for about 6 months.

J.T.: What did you do for Channel 3? I didn't know about this.

D.B.: I did a weekly charity feature just like I'm doing now.

J.T.: Oh, okay, you are doing another one now for a different channel.

D.B.: Yes.

J.T.: What channel do you do it for now?

D.B.: Channel 5, it appears on....

J.T.: That's on the site, um, and, what exactly do you do?

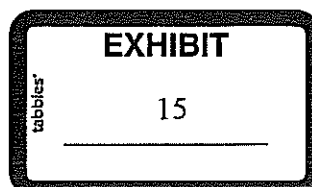
D.B.: Every week I find a charity and I preview it. I go to the events and participate in it and then I cover it and give them a promotion.

J.T.: Cool. And the website is kind of a way to promote that, help generate interest in that?

D.B.: Yes.

J.T.: Cool. How old are you?

D.B.: 34.



J.T.: 34. And did you on your website say that you are the youngest Mayor in the history of Seven Hills?

D.B.: That's what we believe.

J.T.: Okay. Yeah, I guess its hard to know going that far back.

D.B.: I mean there's, the only pictures that we've ever had of mayors – they all look like they're really old.....

J.T.: Right. Usually, the question I want to ask you because I think as you stroll around it strikes me, and I don't know if this is an issue – I don't know if its an issue with the community – if its something people think about or not but you know when you are a young, and you are a young mayor, I mean obviously most mayors are more likely to be in their 40s, 50s even 60s. And I've never been, I'm not a politician and I don't know a lot of young politicians but I imagine some young politicians might be apt to try to act older than they are or just or something to that effect. It seems like you not only make not only no effort to do that but you sort of embrace the fact that you are young and maybe even you know do some things that people would associate with younger people. So if you look on your website you've got a lot of pictures of celebrities. You've got a picture of what looked like your flag football team, right?

D.B.: Yes.

J.T.: You have a flag football team, softball team, etc. I guess I just want to get your take on that and how you deal with the fact that you're a young guy and are sort of obviously not making any effort to be anything different from that.

D.B.: Actually, being young has been one of the most celebrated things for the City. People feel we were stuck in the mud and needed new ideas and new energy.

J.T.: Okay.

D.B.: Every one of those pictures you see has some tie into the City. So when you see the flag football league, well it was on my watch that we started those leagues and those generate cash for the City's recreation programs. When you see me throwing out the first pitch at the Indian's game, well, I was the first mayor for our City to have a – at least that I'm aware of – to have a Seven Hills night at Jacob's Field where all of our residents got half price tickets.

J.T.: Cool.

D.B.: So, every time you see one of those things, if you see me dressed as Superman, well that's because we had Super Hero days at the summer camp with the kids and so rather – so we had 60 kids there – they all dressed in costumes and you got all the kids there and they show up as Super Heroes. So every week we add a different theme for the

kids – which by the way that summer program is a cash cow for the City. We get 60 kids a week come in – they pay huge money to be there and so we have to come up with programming so one of the ideas is a Super Hero and all the kids dress up – as their favorite Super Hero and then we have the real heroes like the police and the firefighters come. So every one of those – someone would argue with young looking type of tendencies are all actually huge benefits for the City. Using the website, using e-mails, finding different ways to reach people, the dive-in movie, showing a movie at the rec center encouraging the young families to come and swim in the pool while they watch a movie. All these young ideas are things that have never been done before and basically what they do is generate interest in the programming of the City and the City itself.

J.T.: Cool.

D.B.: And I got, you know many of those things, every year at Home Days I usually participate in some type of a performance at the Ms. Seven Hills Pageant and people love it because, you know, how often do you see your mayor at the summer festival, its meant to be fun. Everybody's there to have a good time and the kids love that their mayor can come dance with them or you know sing with them or do whatever. So all of these things are positive, and anyone who tries to portray them as juvenile clearly doesn't know the positive impact they have on the City.

J.T.: Do your, do your political enemies try to.....

D.B.: Oh, absolutely.

J.T.: Okay.

D.B.: Absolutely, they...it just knows at them that anything we do is meant to be positive because they come from the school of attacking and being negative, but you know, one thing that is very adult is that the successes we've had in the City. We are one of the only communities around for the last three years that added money to our financials. We've added hundreds and hundred of thousands of dollars to our bottom line while spending millions to improve various City projects. We have a \$350,000,000 development coming on Rockside Road which people talked about doing for 30 years and we may have it in 3 years. We have a \$2 million road program, 2 million road program that is the largest road program going on in the City's history. So, uh, we have the liberty of trying to click on all cylinders. We're taking care of the adult stuff better than anyone ever has and but at the time we're trying to come up with creative ways to get young people involved. And that's one of the dynamics for Seven Hills. I don't know if you know this, but Seven Hills is the oldest community in Cuyahoga County.

J.T.: You told me about that.

D.B.: Not only are we the oldest community, we out distance our closest competitors like 10 years away. 10 years younger than us. So a lot of our – there's kind of a dynamic

here – you know our seniors are in their golden ages and a lot of them are passing away and so as a community we're dealing with a transition.

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: Because we're affordable, when a lot of those seniors pass away, those houses are a good price point for a young family to move in.

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: You know – you can move into Seven Hills for \$160,000, \$170,000 –

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: And that's not bad especially since it's such a nice community. So we're trying to appeal to a younger buyer as well. I'd say everything's been positive, well received. Now I don't promote the charity thing.

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: You didn't get a press release from me saying "hey check out my charity stuff"

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: I hold that pretty sacred. The Plain Dealer lady wanted to profile it a couple of months ago and I said no. So, you know, whatever political stuff you are writing, I really do like to keep it separate from the charity effort because I have an interest in not tainting that if you will.

J.T.: Okay, cool.

D.B.: I don't want anybody to, I mean it's okay if you write about it, but I don't want anyone to think – I don't promote it because I don't want anyone to ever say it's for political gain.

J.T.: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha. Fair enough. Okay, cool, that's all I need.

D.B.: Is this a positive or negative story?

J.T.: Oh, I don't know if it's a story. Who knows if it's an actual story and it's not, it's certainly not negative. I mean, I might have some fun with it, but you know it's not –

D.B.: Can I let you in on one other thing we're doing here? There's actually a reason behind the celebrity thing there.

J.T.: Okay.

D.B.: Any chance I can, we're trying to develop relationships with some of the bands and the promoters because we have been offering for rental our rec center.

J.T.: Okay.

D.B.: We have and this hit me one day -- for years the reason I had backstage passes to a concert one time and the band was talking about how tired they were, how life on the road's miserable, how they can't have fun at the hotel because there's crazy fans there, etc. etc. In other words, Dave Matthews isn't swimming in the pool at the Holiday Inn.

J.T.: No, he's not.

D.B.: So, then it hit me. I'm like oh my gosh, well we have this private rec center that we could shut down for them. Its right next to the police station and you know, money to these guys is nothing.

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: You know most of them are a traveling city -- you know they got 30-40 people in the crew.

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: So, we've been trying to network with some of these groups because we're 10 minutes from downtown and we want to offer for rental our facility. You know if Dave Matthews has 5 tour buses and 100 people it'd be nothing for him to give us ten grand to go rent our pool and our water slides and all that and basketball courts for a day so part of the reason you see me with celebrities is, you know, trying to hustle our rec center and then the other thing is that a lot of those were at just one or two of the charity events -- that's where, that's where the pictures were taken.

J.T.: And that goes right to the youth thing, I mean, I'd probably be hard pressed to find another suburban mayor who in conversation with me about anything is going to reference Dave Matthews or.....

D.B.: Any of those people.

J.T.: Maybe George Clinton. Maybe. And I guess that's a place where you see your gig -- I guess youth can be a disadvantage, in inexperience of course but that's a place for you see it as an advantage.

D.B.: I'll give you even another example. You know I haven't done it yet but you know I turned our police and some of our school people and some others at the rec center -- I said you know are you checking out "MySpace" type stuff? Is there a way to reach our kids that way? Can we, should we be having a "MySpace" for the rec center promoting

events like that so even things like "MySpace" and video editing for my charity stuff I do my own editing. And so we're talking about going around filming a bunch of stuff in the City and then me personally editing kind of an "Around Town" type of feature that we could play in the rec center of City stuff. You know, filming things to do and not to do. You know, filming the seniors sweeping stones into the sewer and saying don't do that and then filming, you know, just things of interest to the City.

J.T.: Right.

D.B.: So, again, what mayors would know how to do TV editing? You know, what mayors – like you said – would have access to bands to try to get them to use the rec center or come perform at a City event, etc. etc.

J.T.: Cool.

D.B.: So it's all meant to just broaden the City's scope.

J.T.: You haven't been able to – that rec center thing hasn't worked out yet but its –

D.B.: Actually, believe it or not, we had a band that was supposed to do it and they got caught in a snow storm last year.

J.T.: Oh, really – what band?

D.B.: It was an opening act with George Clinton.

J.T.: Okay.

D.B.: But they were willing to come, and the thing is we just need to get one in there – it don't matter who it is because once word gets out that its available a lot of these bands are on the same label, so we tried Dave Matthews this year. They are all under the same group and we wanted to get just one in there because they would all talk and say yeah its worth doing.

J.T.: Yeah.

D.B.: Again....

J.T.: Depending on their schedule too because I know a lot of them come in and get the hell out.

D.B.: They, the band it worked perfect. They were coming from Columbus. They would have been there early in the morning, they would have had all day but because of a blizzard they didn't make it.

J.T.: Right. Cool.

J.T.: I will – I'll give you a call back if I have any other questions.

D.B.: Okay.

J.T.: Thanks man.

D.B.: Bye.

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